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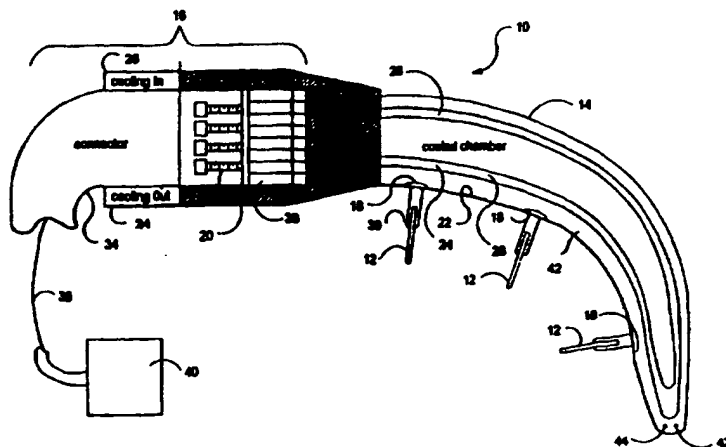
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR COSMETICALLY REMODELING A BODY STRUCTURE



(57) Abstract

An apparatus for ablating at least a portion of an interior of a body structure includes a catheter with a catheter interior and a port formed in a body structure of the catheter. An ablation energy delivery device is at least partially positioned in the catheter interior. The ablation energy delivery device is configured to be advanced through the port into the interior of the body structure to a selected tissue site and deliver an ablation energy to the selected site. The ablation energy delivery device is configured to be coupled to an ablation energy source. A sensor is coupled to the ablation energy source. The sensor is positionable in the interior of the body structure and measures an impedance of at least a portion of the selected tissue site. A conductive medium introduction member is coupled to a source of a conductive medium and the catheter. A feedback control means in coupled to the sensor and the conductive medium source. The feedback control means provides a controlled delivery of the conductive medium to the selected tissue site in response to a level of measured impedance. A cable coupled to the ablation energy delivery device.

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**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR COSMETICALLY
REMODELING A BODY STRUCTURE**

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

5 This application is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Patent
Application No. 08/651,800, entitled "METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR
TREATMENT OF AIR WAY OBSTRUCTIONS", filed May 22, 1996, which is
a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Patent Application No. 08/642,053,
entitled "METHOD FOR TREATMENT OF AIRWAY OBSTRUCTIONS",
10 filed May 3, 1996, which is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Patent
Application No. 08/606,195, filed February 23, 1996, entitled "METHOD FOR
TREATMENT OF AIRWAY OBSTRUCTIONS", which cross-references U.S.
Patent Application No. 08/516,781 filed August 18, 1995, entitled "ABLATION
APPARATUS AND SYSTEM FOR REMOVAL OF SOFT PALATE
TISSUE", having named inventors Stuart D. Edwards, Edward J. Gough and
15 David L. Douglass, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application No.
08/239,658, filed May 9, 1994 entitled "METHOD FOR REDUCING
SNORING BY RF ABLATION OF THE UVULA", all incorporated by
reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

20 **Field of the Invention**

This invention relates to a method and apparatus for reducing an interior
volume of a body structure, and more particularly to a method and apparatus
reducing a volume of the tongue and controlling an impedance through the
introduction of a conductive

25 **Description of Related Art**

Sleep-apnea syndrome is a medical condition characterized by daytime
hypersomnolence, morning arm aches, intellectual deterioration, cardiac
arrhythmias, snoring and thrashing during sleep. It is caused by frequent

episodes of apnea during the patient's sleep. The syndrome is classically subdivided into two types. One type, termed "central sleep apnea syndrome", is characterized by repeated loss of respiratory effort. The second type, termed obstructive sleep apnea syndrome, is characterized by repeated apneic episodes during sleep resulting from obstruction of the patient's upper airway or that portion of the patient's respiratory tract which is cephalad to, and does not include, the larynx.

Treatment thus far includes various medical, surgical and physical measures. Medical measures include the use of medications such as protriptyline, medroxyprogesterone, acetazolamide, theophylline, nicotine and other medications in addition to avoidance of central nervous system depressants such as sedatives or alcohol. The medical measures above are sometimes helpful but are rarely completely effective. Further, the medications frequently have undesirable side effects.

Surgical interventions have included uvulopalatopharyngoplasty, tonsillectomy, surgery to correct severe retrognathia and tracheostomy. In one procedure the jaw is dislodged and pulled forward, in order to gain access to the base of the tongue. These procedures may be effective but the risk of surgery in these patients can be prohibitive and the procedures are often unacceptable to the patients.

Physical measures have included weight loss, nasopharyngeal airways, nasal CPAP and various tongue retaining devices used nocturnally. These measures may be partially effective but are cumbersome, uncomfortable and patients often will not continue to use these for prolonged periods of time.

Weight loss may be effective but is rarely achieved by these patients.

In patients with central sleep apnea syndrome, phrenic nerve or diaphragmatic pacing has been used. Phrenic nerve or diaphragmatic pacing includes the use of electrical stimulation to regulate and control the patient's diaphragm which is innervated bilaterally by the phrenic nerves to assist or support ventilation. This pacing is disclosed in *Direct Diaphragm Stimulation* by J. Mugica et al. PACE vol. 10 Jan-Feb. 1987, Part II, *Preliminary Test of a*

Muscular Diaphragm Pacing System on Human Patients by J. Mugica et al. from *Neurostimulation: An Overview* 1985 pp. 263-279 and *Electrical Activation of Respiration* by Nochomovitz IEEE Eng. in Medicine and Biology, June, 1993.

5 However, it was found that many of these patients also have some degree of obstructive sleep apnea which worsens when the inspiratory force is augmented by the pacer. The ventilation induced by the activation of the diaphragm also collapses the upper airway upon inspiration and draws the patient's tongue inferiorly down the throat choking the patient. These patients
10 then require tracheostomies for adequate treatment.

 A physiological laryngeal pacemaker as described in *Physiological Laryngeal Pacemaker* by F. Kaneko et al. from *Trans Am Soc Artif Intern Organs* 1985 senses volume displaced by the lungs and stimulates the appropriate nerve to open the patient's glottis to treat dyspnea. This apparatus is
15 not effective for treatment of sleep apnea. The apparatus produces a signal proportional in the displaced air volume of the lungs and thereby the signal produced is too late to be used as an indicator for the treatment of sleep apnea. There is often no displaced air volume in sleep apnea due to obstruction.

 One measure that is effective in obstructive sleep apnea is tracheostomy.
20 However, this surgical intervention carries considerable morbidity and is aesthetically unacceptable to many patients. Other surgical procedures include pulling the tongue as forward as possible and surgically cutting and removing sections of the tongue and other structures which can close off the upper airway passage.

25 There is a need for a method and apparatus to overcome these problems. There is a further need for a method and apparatus to ablate a selected section in an interior section of the tongue and to deliver a conductive medium to modify an impedance of the selected section during the delivery of electromagnetic energy to the selected section.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, an object of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus to reduce a volume of an interior of a body structure.

5 Another object of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus to reduce the volume of the tongue.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus to reduce a volume of a selected section of an interior of the tongue.

10 A further object of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus to reduce a volume of an interior section of the tongue and control an impedance of the interior section.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus to reduce a volume of a selected section of an interior of the tongue while introduce a conductive medium to control impedance at the selected section.

15 These and other objects of the invention are achieved in an apparatus for ablating at least a portion of an interior of a body structure including a catheter with a catheter interior and a port formed in a body structure of the catheter. An ablation energy delivery device is at least partially positioned in the catheter interior. The ablation energy delivery device is configured to be advanced from the port into the interior of the body structure to a selected tissue site, and
20 deliver an ablation energy to the selected site. The ablation energy delivery device is configured to be coupled to an ablation energy source. A sensor is coupled to the ablation energy source. The sensor is positionable in the interior of the body structure and measures an impedance of at least a portion of the selected tissue site. A conductive medium introduction member is coupled to a
25 source of a conductive medium and the catheter. A feedback control means is coupled to the sensor and the conductive medium source. The feedback control means provides a controlled delivery of the conductive medium to the selected tissue site in response to a level of measured impedance. A cable couples to the ablation energy delivery device.

30 In another embodiment of the invention, a method for reducing a volume of a tongue provides an ablation apparatus including a source of ablation energy,

an ablation energy delivery device and a conductive medium introduction member coupled to a source of a conductive medium. At least a portion of the ablation energy delivery device is advanced into an interior of the tongue. A sufficient amount of energy is delivered from the energy delivery device into the interior of the tongue to debulk a selected section of the tongue without damaging a hypoglossal nerve. An impedance of the selected section of the tongue is measured. The conductive medium is introduced into the selected section of the tongue to modify the impedance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of an ablation apparatus used with the methods of the present invention.

Figure 2 is cross-sectional view illustrating the catheter and connector of the ablation apparatus shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the connector illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a needle electrode associated with the ablation apparatus illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a flexible needle electrode utilized with the methods of the present invention.

Figure 6 illustrates the creation of ablation zones with the ablation apparatus shown in Figure 1. Figure 7 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue with the mouth closed.

Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue with the mouth open.

Figure 9 is a perspective view of the tongue.

Figure 10 is a perspective view of the dorsum of the tongue.

Figure 11 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue.

Figure 12 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue illustrating the location of the hypoglossal nerves and the creation of an ablation zone.

Figure 13 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue illustrating a plurality of ablation zones.

Figure 14 is a perspective view of the ventral surface of the tongue.

Figure 15 is a cross-sectional view of the tongue.

Figure 16 is an open or closed loop feedback system couple one or more sensors to an energy source.

5 Figure 17 is a block diagram illustrating an analog amplifier, analog multiplexer and microprocessor used with the feedback control system.

Figure 18 is a block diagram of a temperature/impedance feedback system that can be used to control a conductive medium flow rate through the catheter of Figure 1.

10 Figure 19 is a block diagram of a temperature/impedance feedback system that can be used to control cooling medium flow rate through the catheter of Figure 1.

Figure 20 is a three dimensional graph illustrating the percent shrinkage of the tongue following RF ablation.

15 Figure 21 is a graph illustrating two-dimensional shrinkage of bovine tongue tissue with RF ablation.

Figure 22 is a graph illustrating three-dimensional shrinkage of bovine tongue tissue due to RF ablation.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

20 A method for cosmetically remodeling and debulking the tongue, uvula, soft palate, lingual tonsil and/or adenoids provides an ablation apparatus including a source of electromagnetic energy and one or more ablation source delivery devices coupled to the electromagnetic energy source. At least one ablation source delivery device is advanced into an interior of the tongue.

25 Sufficient electromagnetic energy is delivered from the ablation source delivery device to debulk a section of the tongue without damaging the hypoglossal nerve. The ablation source delivery device is then removed from the interior of the tongue. A method for treating airway obstructions is achieved by debulking the tongue without damaging the hypoglossal nerve. The ablation source

30 delivery device can be introduced into the tongue from the tongue's tip, ventral surface, dorsum, underneath the tongue, along the tongue's midline, or in certain

instances through the chin area. The tongue is ablated (debulked) without damaging the hypoglossal nerves, resulting in a remodeling of the tongue and a cosmetic change. This is achieved by positioning the ablation source delivery devices far enough away from the hypoglossal nerves so that during the delivery of electromagnetic energy to the tongue, the hypoglossal nerves are not damaged. Another method for treating airway obstructions is achieved by debulking the lingual tonsil without damaging the hypoglossal nerve. These methods are used to treat sleep apnea.

Referring to Figures 1 and 2, an ablation apparatus 10 for cosmetically remodeling and debulking the tongue, lingual tonsils, uvula, soft palate and/or adenoids is illustrated. Ablation apparatus 10 can be positioned so that one or more energy delivery devices or ablation source delivery devices 12 are introduced into an interior of the tongue through the tongue. Ablation apparatus 10 may include atraumatic intubation with or without visualization, provide for the delivery of oxygen or anesthetics, and can be capable of suctioning blood or other secretions. It will be appreciated that ablation apparatus 10 is used to treat a variety of different obstructions in the body where passage of gas is restricted. One embodiment is the treatment of sleep apnea using ablation source delivery devices 12 to ablate (cell necrosis) selected portions of the tongue, lingual tonsils and/or adenoids by the use of resistive heating, RF, microwave, ultrasound and liquid thermal jet. The preferred energy source is an RF source. In this regard, ablation apparatus 10 can be used to ablate targeted masses including but not limited to the tongue, tonsils, turbinates, soft palate tissues, hard tissue and mucosal tissue. In one embodiment, ablation apparatus 10 is used to debulk the tongue in order to increase the cross-sectional area of the air passageway. A disinfectant medium introduction member introduces a disinfectant medium in the oral cavity in order to reduce infection of the ablated body member.

Prior to debulking the tongue, a presurgical evaluation may be performed including a physical examination, fiberoptic pharyngoscopy, cephalometric analysis and polygraphic monitoring. The physical examination emphasizes the evaluation of the head and neck. It also includes a close examination of the nasal

cavity to identify obstructing deformities of the septum and turbinate; oropharyngeal obstruction from a long, redundant soft palate or hypertrophic tonsils; and hypopharyngeal obstruction from a prominent base of the tongue.

5 Debulking apparatus 10 includes a catheter 14, an optional handle 16 and one or more ablation source delivery devices 12 extending from different ports 18 formed along a longitudinal surface of catheter 14, or from a distal end of ablation source delivery device 12. Catheter 14 can be a handpiece. An advancement device 20 may be provided. Advancement device 20 can include guide tracks or tubes 23 positioned in the interior of catheter 14. Ablation
10 source delivery devices 12 may be positioned in guide tracks 23 and advanced from guide tracks into the interior of the tongue.

Ablation or debulking apparatus 10 includes a catheter 14, an optional handle 16 and one or more ablation source delivery device 12 extending from different ports 18 formed along a longitudinal surface of catheter 14, or from a
15 distal portion of ablation source delivery device 12. Catheter 14 can be a handpiece. Ablation source delivery device advancement device 20, also known as advancement device 20 may be provided. Ablation source delivery device advancement device 20 can include guide tracks or tubes 23 positioned in the interior of catheter 14. Ablation source delivery device 12 may be positioned in
20 guide tracks 23 and advanced from the guide tracks into the interior of the tongue. Cabling is coupled to ablation source delivery device 12.

Ablation source delivery device 12 may be least partially positioned in an interior of catheter 14. In one embodiment, ablation source delivery device 12 is advanced and retracted through a port 18 formed in an exterior surface of
25 catheter 14. Ablation source delivery device advancement and retraction device 20 advances ablation source delivery device 12 out of catheter 14, into an interior of a body structure and can also provide a retraction of ablation source delivery device 12 from the interior of the body structure. Although the body structure can be any number of different structures, the body structure will
30 hereafter be referred to as the tongue. Ablation source delivery device 12 pierce an exterior surface of the tongue and are directed to an interior region of the

tongue. Sufficient ablation energy is delivered by ablation source 12 to the interior of the tongue to cause the tongue to become sufficiently ablated and debulked. Ablation source delivery device 12 can be a hollow structure that is, (i) adapted to deliver different chemicals to a selected tongue interior ablation site (for chemical ablation) (ii) deliver alcohol or other liquids or semi-liquids to achieve ablation as well as a variety of different infusion mediums, including but not limited to saline, chemotherapy, a conductive medium to adjust impedance at the selected tissue site and the like. Different modalities can be combined to achieved a desired ablation including but not limited to RF and chemotherapy, chemical and chemotherapy. Ablation source delivery device 12 may have a limited travel distance in the tongue. In one embodiment with RF electrodes, this is achieved with an insulation sleeve that is in a surrounding relationship to an exterior of an electrode. Other devices can include a structure located on ablation source delivery device 12 which limits their advancement, or a structure coupled to a catheter which limits the advancement of ablation source delivery devices 12, such as a stop and the like. One suitable fluid is an electrolytic solution. Instead of direct contact with tissue and ablation source delivery device 12 for the delivery of thermal energy, a cooled electrolytic solution can be used to deliver the thermal energy to the tissue. The electrolytic solution may be cooled in the range of about 30 to 55 degrees C.

Catheter 14 includes a catheter tissue interface surface 22, a cooling medium inlet conduit 24 and a cooling medium exit conduit 26, as well as a conductive medium channel extending through an interior of catheter 14. Ports 18 are formed in the exterior of catheter 14, and are preferably formed on catheter tissue interface surface 22. Ports 18 are isolated from a cooling medium flowing through catheter 14. Cooling provides a cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22 of at least 1 to 2 cm². More preferably, the cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22 is at least equal to the cross-sectional diameter of the underlying zone of ablation. In one embodiment, the cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22 is at least equal to the cross-sectional diameter of the underlying zone of ablation. In another

embodiment, the cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22 only provides cooling to an area associated with each deployed ablation source delivery device. The size of the cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22 varies for each patient. The size is sufficient enough to minimize swelling of the tongue following the delivery of electromagnetic energy. The reduction of swelling can be 50% or greater, 75% or greater, and 90% and greater. The amount of cooling provided is sufficient to enable the patient to return home shortly after the debulking procedure is performed, and not run the risk of choking on the tongue. It has been found that by providing a sufficient level of cooling over a relatively large area, the amount of ablation in an interior region of the tongue is enhanced. By providing a sufficiently large enough cooled section of catheter tissue interface surface 22, an adenomas response is minimized.

A conductive medium source is coupled to ablation source delivery device 12, which is typically a needle electrode. The conductive medium channel receives conductive medium and delivers it to the needle electrode. The level of impedance is monitored, and the delivery of conductive medium is increased or decreased depending on the measured impedance.

Handle 16 is preferably made of an insulating material. When ablation source delivery device 12 is an electrode the electrode is made of a conductive material such as stainless steel. Additionally, the electrode 12 can be made of a shaped memory metal, such as nickel titanium, commercially available from Raychem Corporation, Menlo Park, California. In one embodiment, only a distal end of electrode 12 is made of the shaped memory metal in order to effect a desired deflection. When introduced into the oral cavity, catheter 14 can be advanced until a patient's gag response is initiated. Catheter 14 is then retracted back to prevent patient's gagging. The distal end of electrode 12 can be semi-curved. The distal end can have a geometry to conform to an exterior of the tongue.

In one embodiment of the invention catheter 14 is a handpiece. In this embodiment, a separate handle 16 is not necessary. Debulking apparatus 10 is

used to treat an interior region of the tongue. Catheter 14 has a distal end that is sized to be positioned within an oral cavity. Ablation source delivery device 12 is at least partially positioned within an interior of catheter 14. Ablation source delivery device 12 includes ablation delivery surface 30. Ablation source
5 delivery device 20 is coupled to ablation source delivery device 12 and calibrated to advance ablation source delivery device 12 from catheter 14, including but not limited to a distal position of catheter 14, into the interior of the tongue when catheter 14 is positioned adjacent to a surface of the tongue. Ablation source delivery device 12 is advanced an advancement distance 33 from catheter 14 of
10 sufficient length to treat the interior region of the tongue with ablation energy and/or an ablation effect without damaging the hypoglossal nerve or the surface of the tongue.

Catheter 14 can be malleable in order to conform to the surface of the tongue when a selected ablation target site is selected. An encapsulated soft
15 metal, such as copper, or an annealed metal/plastic material can be used to form malleable catheter 14. All or a portion of catheter 14 may be malleable or made of a shaped memory metal.

For many applications it is desirable for a distal end 14' of catheter 14 to be deflectable. This can be achieved mechanically or with the use of memory
20 metals. A steering wire, or other mechanical structure, can be attached to either the exterior or interior of distal end 14'. In one embodiment, a deflection knob located on handle 16 is activated by the physician causing a steering wire to tighten. This imparts a retraction of distal end 14', resulting in its deflection. It will be appreciated that other mechanical devices can be used in place of the
25 steering wire. The deflection may be desirable for tissue sites with difficult access.

Controlled volumetric reduction of the tongue, under feedback control is used to achieve an effective opening in the airway passage. A variety of different pain killing medicaments, including but not limited to Xylocaine, may be used. A
30 digital ultrasonic measurement system can be used. The ultrasound measurement quantifies biological shape changes, provides ultrasonic transmission and

reception, uses piezoelectric transducers (crystals) and provides time of flight data.

A disinfectant medium introduction member 21 may also be introduced into the oral cavity. The disinfectant medium can be introduced prior to
5 ablation, during ablation and/or after the ablation. It can be delivered continuously. The level of disinfection of the oral cavity is selectable as the volume of the oral cavity that is disinfected. The degree of disinfection varies. Disinfection is provided to reduce infection of the ablated body structure. Disinfectant medium introduction member 21 can be introduced before, after or
10 during the introduction of ablation apparatus 10 into the oral cavity. Additionally, disinfectant medium introduction member 21 can be removed at the same time or at a different time that ablation apparatus 10 is removed from the oral cavity.

Disinfectant medium introduction member 21 can be included in ablation
15 apparatus 10, in an interior of catheter 14 or at an exterior of catheter 14, and may be an introducer with a lumen configured to introduce a disinfectant agent from a disinfectant agent source 23 into all or a selected portion of the oral cavity. Disinfectant medium introduction member 21 can be capable of movement within the oral cavity in order to provide for disinfection of all or only
20 a portion of the oral cavity. For purposes of this disclosure, the oral cavity is that body internal environment where infectious germs may be introduced into the ablated tongue, soft tissue structure, and the like. Disinfectant medium introduction member 21 may be slideably positioned in catheter 14 or at its exterior. Alternatively, disinfectant medium introduction member 21 can be an
25 optical fiber coupled to a light energy source, including but not limited to a UV source 25. The optical fiber can also be slideably be positioned in the oral cavity. The optical fiber is configured to provide for the selective disinfection of all or only a portion of the oral cavity and can have a variety of different distal ends to achieve this purpose.

30 Suitable disinfectant agents include but are not limited to Peridex, an oral rinse containing 0.12% chlorhexidine glucinate (1, 1'-hexanethylenebis[5-(p-

chlorophenyl) biganide} di-D-gluconate in a base containing water, 11.6% alcohol, glycerin, PEG 40 sorbitan arisoterate, flavor, dosium saccharin, and FD&C Blue No. 1.

5 It will be appreciated that a variety of different disinfectants can be employed, including other electromagnetic wavelengths, and various chemical compositions.

Ablation source delivery devices 12 are at least partially positioned in an interior of catheter 14. Each ablation source delivery device 12 is advanced and retracted through a port 18 formed in an exterior surface of catheter 14.

10 Advancement and retraction device advances ablation source delivery devices 12 out of catheter 14, into an interior of a body structure and retracted back into catheter 14. Ablation source delivery devices 12 pierce an exterior surface of the tongue and are directed to an interior region of the tongue. Sufficient electromagnetic energy is delivered by ablation source delivery devices 12 to the

15 interior of the tongue to cause the tongue to become sufficiently ablated and debulked. Ablation source delivery devices 12 can be hollow to receive a variety of different infusion mediums, including but not limited to saline. Ablation source delivery devices 12 may be limited in the distance that they can be advanced into the tongue. This is achieved with an insulation sleeve, a structure

20 located on ablation source delivery devices 12 which limits their advancement, or a structure coupled to catheter which limits the advancement of ablation source delivery devices 12, such as a stop and the like.

The disinfectant medium can be introduced prior to ablation, during ablation and/or after the ablation. It can be delivered continuously. The level of

25 disinfection of the oral cavity is selectable as is the volume of the oral cavity that is disinfected. The degree of disinfection varies. Disinfection is provided to reduce infection of the ablated body structure.

An ablation delivery surface, such as an electromagnetic energy delivery surface 30 of electrode 12 can be adjusted by inclusion of an adjustable or non-

30 adjustable insulation sleeve 32 (Figures 3, 4, and 5). Insulation sleeve 32 can be advanced and retracted along the exterior surface of electrode 12 in order to

increase or decrease the length of the electromagnetic energy delivery surface 30. Insulation sleeve 32 can be made of a variety of materials including but not limited to nylon, polyimides, other thermoplastics and the like. The size of electromagnetic energy delivery surface 30 can be varied by other methods including but not limited to creating a segmented electrode with a plurality of electrodes that are capable of being multiplexed and individually activated, and the like.

Referring specifically to Figure 4, ablation source delivery device 12 has an advancement length 33 that extends from an exterior surface of catheter 14 and is directed into the interior of the tongue. Advancement length 33 is sufficient to position ablation delivery surface 30 at a selected tissue site in the interior of the tongue. Ablation delivery surface 30 is of sufficient length so that the ablation effect is delivered to the selected tissue site, create a desired level of ablation at the selected tissue site without causing damage to the hypoglossal nerve. Ablation delivery surface 30 is not always at the distal end of ablation source delivery device 12. Insulation 32 can also be positioned at the distal end of ablation source delivery device 12. In this embodiment, ablation delivery surface 30 does not extend to the distal end of ablation source delivery device 12. However, ablation delivery surface 30 still delivers a sufficient ablation effect to create a desired level of cell necrosis in the interior of the tongue at the selected tissue site without damaging the hypoglossal nerve and/or damage to the surface of the tongue. Additionally, only one side or a portion of a side of ablation source delivery device 12 can be insulated. This also provides for an ablation source delivery device 12 which can be positioned throughout the tongue, including adjacent to a hypoglossal nerve. Where ablation source delivery device 12 is adjacent to the hypoglossal nerve, ablation source delivery device 12 is insulated.

In one embodiment, advancement length 33 is 1.2 to 1.5 cm, and the length of ablation delivery surface 30 is 5 to 10 mm, more preferably about 8 mm.

In another embodiment, advancement length 33 is insufficient to reach the hypoglossal nerve when introduced through any of the tongue surfaces, particularly the dorsum of the tongue.

Advancement device 20 is configured to advance at least a portion of each ablation source delivery device 12 to a placement position in the interior of the tongue. Advancement device 20 can also be configured to retract each ablation source delivery device 12. At the placement position, ablation delivery surface delivers sufficient ablation energy and/or effect to reduce a volume of the selected site without damaging a hypoglossal nerve and/or a surface of the tongue. In one embodiment, ablation source delivery device advancement and retraction device 20, with or without guide tracks 23, directs the delivery of ablation source delivery device 12 from catheter 14 into the interior of the tongue at an angle of 60 to 90 degrees relative to a longitudinal axis of catheter 14, and preferably about 70 degrees.

In certain embodiments, ablation source delivery device 12 has a geometric shape, including but not limited to a curved configuration that includes one or more insulated surfaces, either partially insulated on one side, at a proximal end, at a distal end, and the like, that is configured to reduce the volume of the selected tissue site without damaging a hypoglossal nerve. In one embodiment, ablation source delivery device 12 is introduced through any tongue surface and is configured so that a section of ablation source delivery device 12 which may be positioned close to the hypoglossal nerve is provided with insulation 32. As previously noted, insulation 32 can be positioned at different sites of ablation source delivery device 12.

Handle 16 can comprise a connector 34 coupled to retraction and advancement device 20. Connector 34 provides a coupling of ablation source delivery devices 12 to power, feedback control, temperature and/or imaging systems. An RF/temperature control block 36 can be included.

In one embodiment, the physician moves retraction and advancement device 20 in a direction toward a distal end of connector 34. Ablation source delivery devices 12 can be spring loaded. When retraction and advancement

device 20 is moved back, springs cause selected ablation source delivery devices 12 to advance out of catheter 14.

One or more cables 38 couple ablation source delivery devices 12 to an electromagnetic energy source 40. A variety of energy sources 40 can be used with the present invention to transfer electromagnetic energy to the interior of a body structure, including but not limited to RF, microwave, ultrasound, coherent light and thermal transfer. Preferably, energy source 40 is a RF generator. When a RF energy source is used, the physician can activate RF energy source 40 by the use of a foot switch (not shown) coupled to RF energy source 40.

One or more sensors 42 may be positioned on an interior or exterior surface of ablation source delivery device 12, insulation sleeve 32, or be independently inserted into the interior of the body structure. Sensors 42 permit accurate measurement of temperature at a tissue site in order to determine, (i) the extent of ablation, (ii) the amount of ablation, (iii) whether or not further ablation is needed, and (iv) the boundary or periphery of the ablated geometry. Further, sensors 42 prevent non-targeted tissue from being destroyed or ablated.

Sensors 42 are of conventional design, including but not limited to thermistors, thermocouples, resistive wires, and the like. Suitable sensors 42 include a T type thermocouple with copper constantene, J type, E type, K type, fiber optics, resistive wires, thermocouple IR detectors, and the like. It will be appreciated that sensors 42 need not be thermal sensors.

Sensors 42 measure temperature and/or impedance to permit ablation monitoring. This reduces damage to tissue surrounding the targeted ablation mass. By monitoring the temperature at various points within the interior of the body structure the periphery of ablation can be ascertained and it is possible to determine when the ablation is completed. If at any time sensor 42 determines that a desired ablation temperature is exceeded, then an appropriate feedback signal is received at energy source 40 and the amount of energy delivered is regulated.

Ablation or debulking apparatus 10 can include visualization capability including but not limited to a viewing scope, an expanded eyepiece, fiber optics, video imaging, and the like.

5 Additionally, ultrasound imaging can be used to position the ablation source delivery devices 12 and/or determine the amount of ablation. One or more ultrasound transducers 44 can be positioned in or on ablation source delivery device 12, catheter 14, or on a separate device. An imaging probe may also be used internally or externally to the selected tissue site. A suitable imaging probe is Model 21362, manufactured and sold by Hewlett Packard
10 Company. Each ultrasound transducer 44 is coupled to an ultrasound source (not shown).

With reference now to Figure 6 catheter 14 is shown as being introduced into the oral cavity and multiple RF ablation source delivery devices 12 are advanced into the interior of the tongue creating different ablation zones 46.
15 Using RF, ablation apparatus 10 can be operated in either bipolar or monopolar modes. In Figure 6, electrodes 12 are operated in the bipolar mode, creating sufficient ablation zones 46 to debulk the tongue without affecting the hypoglossal nerves and creating a larger airway passage. With this debulking, the back of the tongue moves in a forward direction away from the air
20 passageway. The result is an increase in the cross-sectional diameter of the air passageway.

Using RF, ablation apparatus 10 can also be operated in the monopolar mode. A groundpad can be positioned in a convenient place such as under the chin. A single electrode 12 is positioned in the tongue to create a first ablation
25 zone 46. Electrode 12 can then be retracted from the interior of the tongue, catheter 14 moved, and electrode 12 is then advanced from catheter 14 into another interior section of the tongue. A second ablation zone 46 is created. This procedure can be completed any number of times to form different ablation regions in the interior of the tongue. More than one electrode 12 can be
30 introduced into the tongue and operated in the bipolar mode. Electrodes 12 are

then repositioned in the interior of the tongue any number of times to create a plurality of connecting or non-connecting ablation zones 46.

Referring now to Figures 7 through 15, various anatomical views of the tongue and other structures are illustrated. The different anatomical structures are as follows: the genioglossus muscle, or body of the tongue is denoted as 48; the geniohyoid muscle is 50; the mylohyoid muscle is 52; the hyoid bone is 54; the tip of the tongue is 56; the ventral surface of the tongue is denoted as 58; the dorsum of the tongue is denoted as 60; the inferior dorsal of the tongue is denoted as 62; the reflex of the vallecula is 64; the lingual follicles are denoted as 66; the uvula is 68; the adenoid area is 70; the lateral border of the tongue is 72; the circumvallate papilla is 74, the palatine tonsil is 76; the pharynx is 78; the redundant pharyngeal tissue is 80; the foramen cecum is 82; the hypoglossal nerve is 84, and the lingual frenum of the tongue is 86.

Dorsum 60 is divided into an anterior 2/3 and inferior dorsal 62. The delineation is determined by circumvallate papilla 74 and foramen cecum 82. Inferior dorsal 62 is the dorsal surface inferior to circumvallate papilla 74 and superior reflex of the vallecula 64. Reflex of the vallecula 64 is the deepest portion of the surface of the tongue contiguous with the epiglottis. Lingual follicles 66 comprise the lingual tonsil.

Catheter 14 can be introduced through the nose or through the oral cavity. Electrodes 12 can be inserted into an interior of the tongue through dorsum surface 60, inferior dorsal surface 62, ventral surface 58, tip 56 or geniohyoid muscle 50. Additionally, electrodes may be introduced into an interior of lingual follicles 66 and into adenoid area 70. Once electrodes 12 are positioned, insulation sleeve 32 may be adjusted to provide a desired electromagnetic energy delivery surface 30 for each electrode 12.

Ablation zones 46 are created without damaging hypoglossal nerves 84. This creates a larger air way passage and provides a treatment for sleep apnea.

In all instances, the positioning of electrodes 12, as well as the creation of ablation zones 46 is such that hypoglossal nerves 84 are not ablated or damaged. The ability to swallow and speak is not impaired.

In one embodiment, RF electrode 12 are placed on the dorsum surface of the tongue. The first electrode is positioned 0.5 cm proximal to the circumvallate papilla. The other electrodes are spaced 1.6 cm apart and are 1 cm off a central axis of the tongue. In one embodiment, 465 MHz RF was applied.

5 The temperature at the distal end of electrode 12 was about 100 degrees C. The temperature at the distal end of the insulation sleeve 32 was about 60 degrees C. In another embodiment, the temperature at the distal end of insulation sleeve 32 was 43 degrees C and above. RF energy can be applied as short duration pulses with low frequency RF. Precise targeting of a desired ablation site is achieved.

10 One or more electrodes 12 may be used to create volumetric three-dimensional ablation. A variety of ablation geometries are possible, including but not limited to rectilinear, polyhedral, redetermined shapes, symmetrical and non-symmetrical.

Referring now to Figures 16 and 17 an open or closed loop feedback

15 system couples sensors 42 to energy source 40. The temperature of the tissue, or of electrode 12 is monitored, and the output power of energy source 40 adjusted accordingly. Additionally, the level of disinfection in the oral cavity can be monitored. The physician can, if desired, override the closed or open loop system. A microprocessor can be included and incorporated in the closed or

20 open loop system to switch power on and off, as well as modulate the power. The closed loop system utilizes a microprocessor 88 to serve as a controller, watch the temperature, adjust the RF power, look at the result, refeed the result, and then modulate the power.

With the use of sensors 42 and the feedback control system a tissue

25 adjacent to RF electrodes 12 can be maintained at a desired temperature for a selected period of time without impeding out. Each RF electrode 12 is connected to resources which generate an independent output for each RF electrode 12. An output maintains a selected energy at RF electrodes 12 for a selected length of time.

30 When an RF electrode is used, current delivered through RF electrodes 12 is measured by current sensor 90. Voltage is measured by voltage sensor 92.

Impedance and power are then calculated at power and impedance calculation device 94. These values can then be displayed at user interface and display 96. Signals representative of power and impedance values are received by a controller 98.

5 A control signal is generated by controller 98 that is proportional to the difference between an actual measured value, and a desired value. The control signal is used by power circuits 100 to adjust the power output in an appropriate amount in order to maintain the desired power delivered at respective RF electrodes 12.

10 In a similar manner, temperatures detected at sensors 42 provide feedback for maintaining a selected power. The actual temperatures are measured at temperature measurement device 102, and the temperatures are displayed at user interface and display 96. A control signal is generated by controller 98 that is proportional to the difference between an actual measured
15 temperature, and a desired temperature. The control signal is used by power circuits 100 to adjust the power output in an appropriate amount in order to maintain the desired temperature delivered at the respective sensor. A multiplexer can be included to measure current, voltage and temperature, at the numerous sensors 42, and energy can be delivered to RF electrodes 12 in
20 monopolar or bipolar fashion.

 Controller 98 can be a digital or analog controller, or a computer with software. When controller 98 is a computer it can include a CPU coupled through a system bus. On this system can be a keyboard, a disk drive, or other non-volatile memory systems, a display, and other peripherals, as are known in
25 the art. Also coupled to the bus is a program memory and a data memory.

 User interface and display 96 includes operator controls and a display. Controller 98 can be coupled to imaging systems, including but not limited to ultrasound, CT scanners, X-ray, MRI, mammographic X-ray and the like. Further, direct visualization and tactile imaging can be utilized.

30 The output of current sensor 90 and voltage sensor 92 is used by controller 98 to maintain a selected power level at RF electrodes 12 as well as

adjust the amount of conductive medium to electrode 12 to maintain a selected impedance level. The amount of RF energy delivered controls the amount of power. A profile of power delivered can be incorporated in controller 98, and a preset amount of energy to be delivered can also be profiled. Other sensors
5 similar to sensors 90 and 92 can be used by controller 98 for other ablation source delivery devices 12 to maintain a controllable amount of an ablation energy and/or ablative agent.

Circuitry, software and feedback to controller 98 result in process control, and the maintenance of the selected power that is independent of
10 changes in voltage or current, and are used to change, (i) the selected power, (ii) the duty cycle (on-off and wattage), (iii) bipolar or monopolar energy delivery, and (iv) infusion medium delivery, including flow rate and pressure. These process variables are controlled and varied, while maintaining the desired delivery of power independent of changes in voltage or current, based on
15 temperatures monitored at sensors 42.

Current sensor 90 and voltage sensor 92 are connected to the input of an analog amplifier 104. Analog amplifier 104 can be a conventional differential amplifier circuit for use with sensors 42. The output of analog amplifier 104 is sequentially connected by an analog multiplexer 106 to the input of A/D
20 converter 108. The output of analog amplifier 104 is a voltage which represents the respective sensed temperatures. Digitized amplifier output voltages are supplied by A/D converter 108 to microprocessor 88. Microprocessor 88 may be a type 68HCII available from Motorola. However, it will be appreciated that any suitable microprocessor or general purpose digital or analog computer can
25 be used to calculate impedance or temperature.

Microprocessor 88 sequentially receives and stores digital representations of impedance and temperature. Each digital value received by microprocessor 88 corresponds to different temperatures and impedances.

Calculated power and impedance values can be indicated on user
30 interface and display 96. Alternatively, or in addition to the numerical indication of power or impedance, calculated impedance and power values can be

compared by microprocessor 88 with power and impedance limits. When the values exceed predetermined power or impedance values, a warning can be given on user interface and display 96, and additionally, the delivery of RF energy can be reduced, modified or interrupted. A control signal from microprocessor 88
5 can modify the power level supplied by energy source 40.

Figure 18 illustrates a block diagram of a temperature/impedance feedback system that can be used to control conductive medium flow rate through catheter 14. Electromagnetic energy is delivered to electrode 12 by energy source 44, and applied to tissue. A monitor 110 ascertains tissue
10 impedance, based on the energy delivered to tissue, and compares the measured impedance value to a set value. If the measured impedance exceeds the set value a signal 112 is transmitted to conductive medium source in order to adjust the amount of conductive solution delivered to electrode 12 and to maintain the impedance at a selected level. If measured impedance is within acceptable limits,
15 conductive medium continues to be applied to the tissue. During the application of energy to tissue sensor 42 measures the impedance of tissue and/or electrode 12. A comparator 114 receives a signal representative of the measured impedance and compares this value to a pre-set signal representative of the desired impedance. Comparator 114 sends a signal to a flow regulator 116
20 representing a need for a higher conductive medium flow rate, if the tissue impedance is too high, or to lower the flow rate if the measured impedance is at an acceptable level.

Referring now to Figure 19, energy source 40 is coupled to electrode 12, to apply a biologically safe voltage to the selected tissue site.

25 Measuring circuits determine the root mean square (RMS) values or magnitudes of the current and voltage. These values, represented as voltages, are inputted to a diving circuit D to geometrically calculate, by dividing the RMS voltage value by the RMS current value, the impedance of the tissue site at sensor 42.

30 The output voltage of the divider circuit D is presented at the positive (+) input terminal of comparator A. A voltage source V_o supplies a voltage across

the variable resistor R_v , thus allowing one to manually adjust the voltage presented at the negative input of comparator A. This voltage represents a maximum impedance value beyond which power will not be applied to electrode 12.

5 The flow rate of conductive medium can be controlled based on the tissue impedance. In one embodiment, the switch S is activated to allow the impedance signal to enter the positive (+) input terminal of comparator A. This signal along with the reference voltage applied to the negative (-) input terminal actuates comparator A to produce an output signal. If the selected tissue
10 ablation site is heated to a biologically damaging temperature, the tissue impedance will exceed a selected impedance value seen at the negative (-) input terminal, thereby generating a disabling signal to disable energy source 40, ceasing the power supplied to electrode 12.

 The output signal of comparator A can be communicated to a pump
15 coupled to the source of conductive medium. If the impedance of the selected tissue ablation site is too high, despite the tissue impedance falling within acceptable limits, the pump adjusts the rate of conductive medium flow applied to electrode 12.

EXAMPLE 1

20 Ablation apparatus 10 was used to determine two-dimensional shrinkage of a bovine. RF volumetric reduction was achieved using a single needle electrode. Four miniature ultrasonic crystals were positioned to form a square. Measurements were taken at control and post volumetric reduction at 15 watts initially with a 13% volumetric reduction, and 15 watts for 4 hours with an
25 additional 4% volumetric reduction. A total 17% volumetric reduction was achieved.

EXAMPLE 2

 Ablation apparatus 10 was used to determine three-dimensional shrinkage of a bovine tongue. RF volumetric reduction was achieved with a
30 single needle electrode with eight miniature ultrasonic crystals, creating a cube. Application of 16 watts initially produced a 17% volumetric reduction of the

tongue, 25 watts applied initially produced a 25% volumetric reduction, and 25 watts after hours produced an additional 4% reduction, for a total volumetric reduction of 29%.

EXAMPLE 3

5 A 35% volumetric reduction was achieved in porcine *in vivo*, with three dimensional gross at 20 watts initial application.

Referring now to Figure 19, ablation volume dimensions were measured with a multidimensional digital sonomicrometry. An average decrease in the Z direction was 20%, and volume shrinkage was 26%. Three-dimensional
10 shrinkage of tongue tissue due to *in vivo* RF ablation with the needle, ablation with 20 Watts) is presented in Figure 20. Control volume before ablation is compared with a post-ablation volume.

Figure 20 illustrates two-dimensional shrinkage of a bovine tongue tissue due to RF ablation with a needle electrode. The before and after ablation results
15 are illustrated.

Figure 21 illustrates in graph form ablation at 16 Watts resulted in a 17% volume shrinkage of the tissue in post-ablation verses control. Ablation at 25 watts resulted in a 25% volume shrinkage after ablation. An additional 4% area shrinkage was obtained after in long-term post ablation (4 hours) verses post-
20 ablation.

Figure 22 illustrates a percent volume change after RF ablation. 16 Watts, ablation at 16 Watts for 20 minutes; 25 Watts, ablation at 25 Watts for 20 minutes; 25 Watts (4 hours), and long term post ablation (4 hours after 25 Watts ablation).

25 The foregoing description of a preferred embodiment of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Obviously, many modifications and variations will be apparent to practitioners skilled in this art. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the following
30 claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

1. An apparatus for ablating at least a portion of an interior of a body structure, comprising:

5 a catheter including a catheter interior and a port formed in a body structure of the catheter;

an ablation energy delivery device at least partially positioned in the catheter interior and configured to be advanced from the port into the interior of the body structure to a selected tissue site and deliver an ablation energy to the selected site, wherein the ablation energy delivery device is configured to be
10 coupled to an ablation energy source;

a sensor coupled to the ablation energy source, wherein the sensor is positionable in the interior of the body structure and measures an impedance of at least a portion of the selected tissue site;

15 a conductive medium introduction member coupled to a source of a conductive medium and the catheter;

a feedback control means coupled to the sensor and the conductive medium source, wherein the feedback control means provides a controlled delivery of the conductive medium to the selected tissue site in response to a level of measured impedance; and

20 a cable coupled to the ablation energy delivery device.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

an ablation energy delivery device advancement and retraction device at least partially positioned in the interior of the catheter.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the conductive medium

25 introduction member is a lumen at least partially positioned in an interior of the catheter.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ablation energy delivery device includes an interior hollow lumen and an outflow port.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the conductive medium introduction member is coupled to the ablation energy delivery device.

5 6. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a cooling element including a cooling medium inlet conduit and a cooling medium exit conduit both extending through an interior of the catheter forming at least a partial cooled catheter tissue interface surface, wherein the ablation energy delivery device has an ablation energy delivery surface that is thermally
10 isolated from the cooling element.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
an insulation sleeve positioned in a surrounding relationship to at least a portion of an exterior surface of the ablation energy delivery device.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sensor is positioned at a
15 distal end of the ablation energy delivery device.

9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the sensor positioned at a distal end of the ablation energy delivery device and a second sensor is positioned at a distal end of the insulation sleeve.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ablation energy delivery
20 device is an RF electrode.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a comparator device configured to compare a measured impedance of a tissue site to a predetermined impedance value and generate a signal

representative of a difference between the measured impedance and the predetermined impedance.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
a fluid control device for regulating a rate of flow of the conductive
5 medium through an ablation energy delivery device lumen in response to the
signal from the comparator device.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
an energy output control device coupled to the energy source.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the energy output control
10 device comprises:
an impedance measuring device for measuring an impedance value of
tissue based on an energy applied to the tissue;
an impedance comparator device for comparing the measured impedance
value of tissue to a predetermined maximum impedance value, the impedance
15 comparing device generating a disabling signal if the measured impedance value
exceeds the predetermined maximum impedance value; and
a communication device for communicating the disabling signal to the
energy source to cease further delivery of energy from the energy source to the
ablation energy delivery device.

15. A method for reducing a volume of a tongue, comprising:
20 providing an ablation apparatus including a source of ablation energy, an
ablation energy delivery device and a conductive medium introduction member
coupled to a source of a conductive medium;
advancing at least a portion of the ablation energy delivery device into an
25 interior of the tongue;

delivering a sufficient amount of energy from the energy delivery device into the interior of the tongue to debulk a selected section of the tongue without damaging a hypoglossal nerve;

measuring an impedance of the selected section of the tongue; and

5 introducing the conductive medium to the selected section of the tongue to modify the impedance.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is an RF source and the ablation energy delivery device is an RF electrode.

10 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a coherent source of light and the ablation energy delivery device is an optical fiber.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a heated fluid and the ablation energy delivery device is a catheter with a closed channel configured to receive the heated fluid.

15 19. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a heated fluid and the ablation energy delivery device is a catheter with an open channel configured to receive the heated fluid.

20 20. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a cooled fluid and the ablation energy delivery device is a catheter with a closed channel configured to receive the cooled fluid.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a cooled fluid and the ablation energy delivery device is a catheter with an open channel configured to receive the cooled fluid.

25 22. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a cryogenic fluid.

23. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a microwave source providing energy from 915 MHz to 2.45 GHz and the ablation energy delivery device is a microwave antenna.

5 24. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the energy source is an ultrasound source and the ablation energy delivery device is an ultrasound emitter.

25. The method of claim 15, wherein the energy source is a microwave source.

10 26. The method of claim 15, wherein the electrode is advanced into an interior of the tongue through a ventral surface of the tongue.

27. The method of claim 15, wherein the ablation energy delivery device is advanced into an interior of the tongue through an inferior dorsal surface of the tongue.

15 28. The method of claim 15, wherein the ablation energy delivery device is advanced into an interior of the tongue through a dorsum surface of the tongue.

29. The method of claim 15, wherein the ablation energy delivery device is advanced into an interior of the tongue through a tip of the tongue.

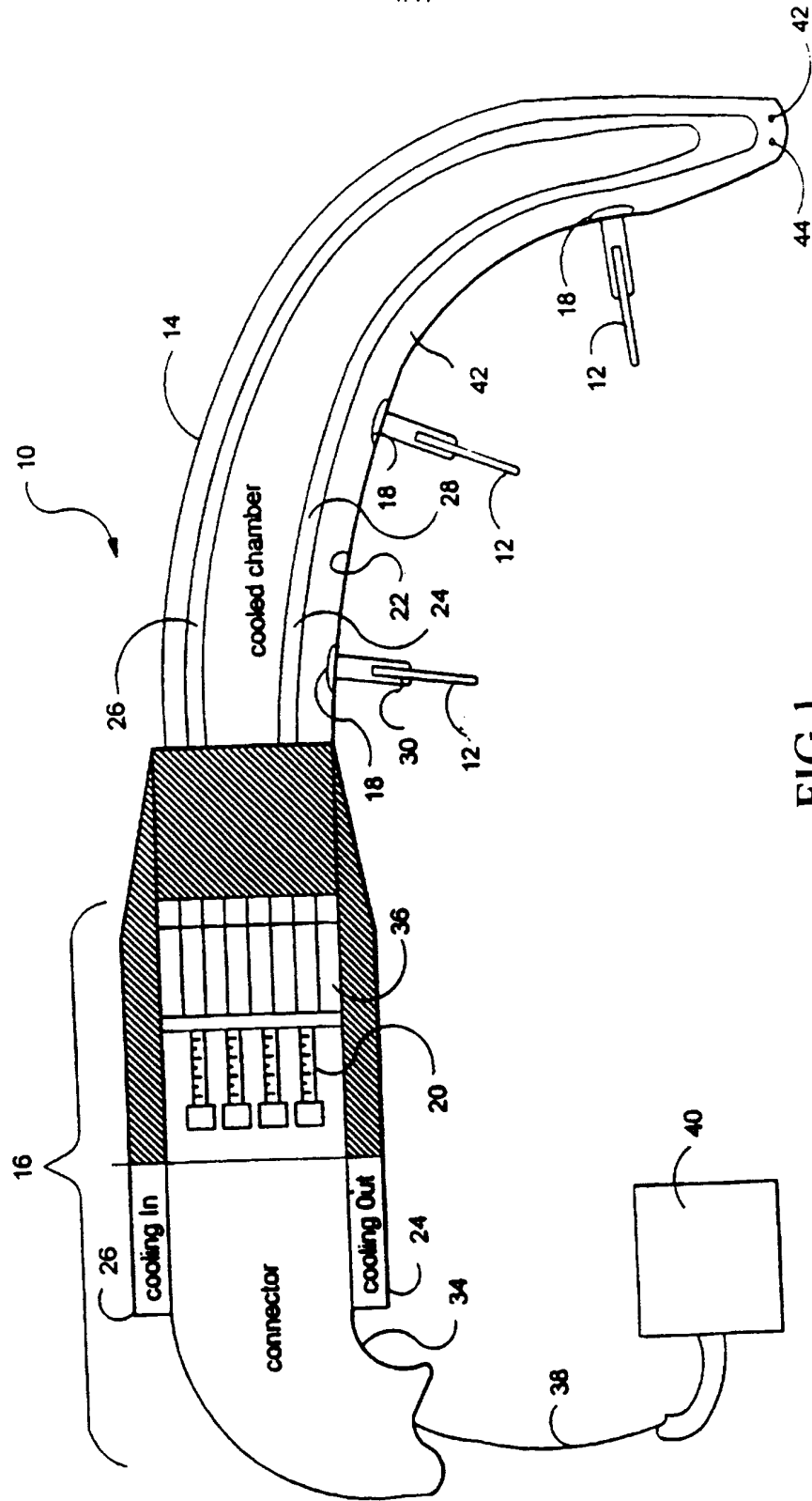
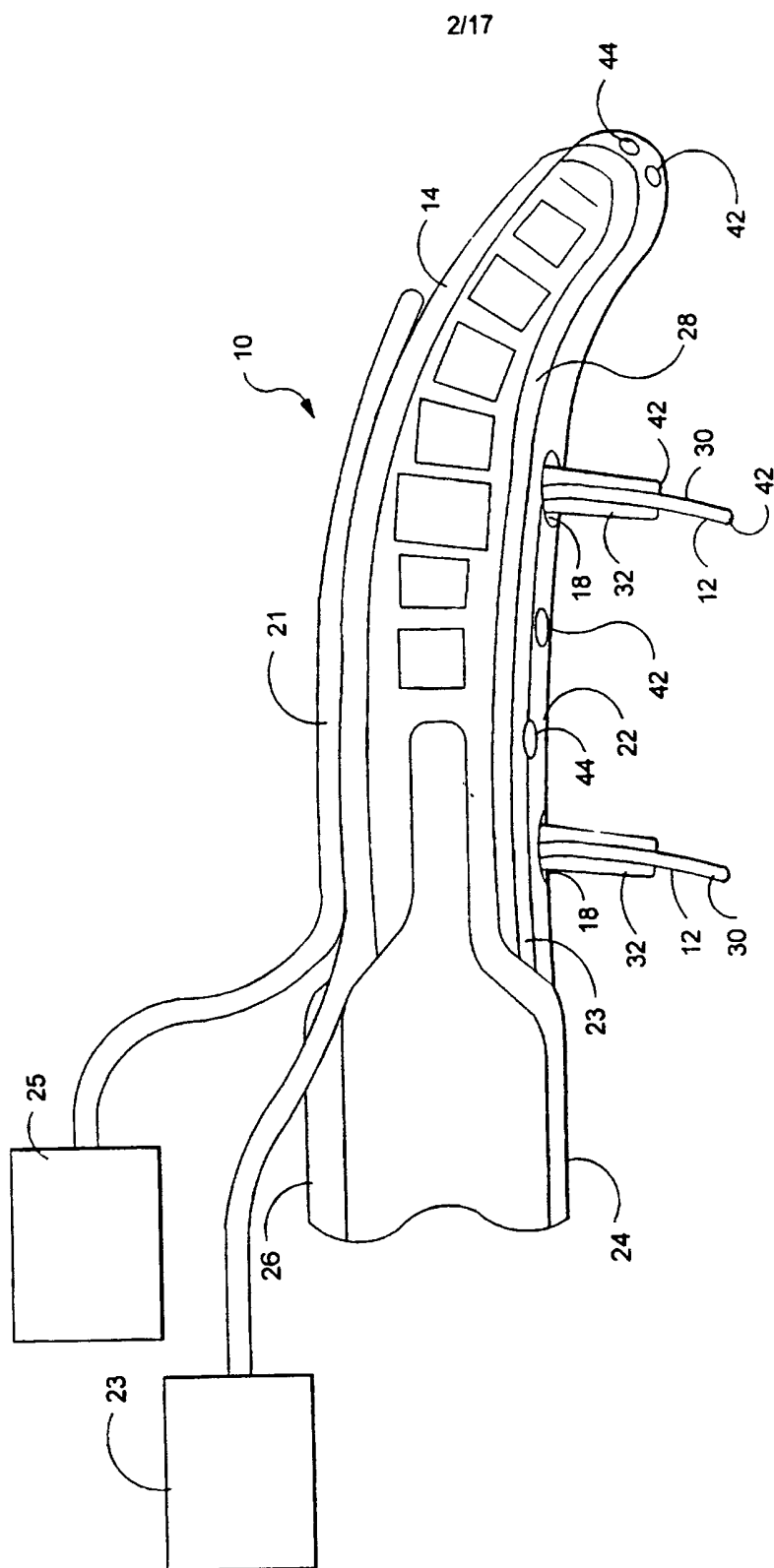
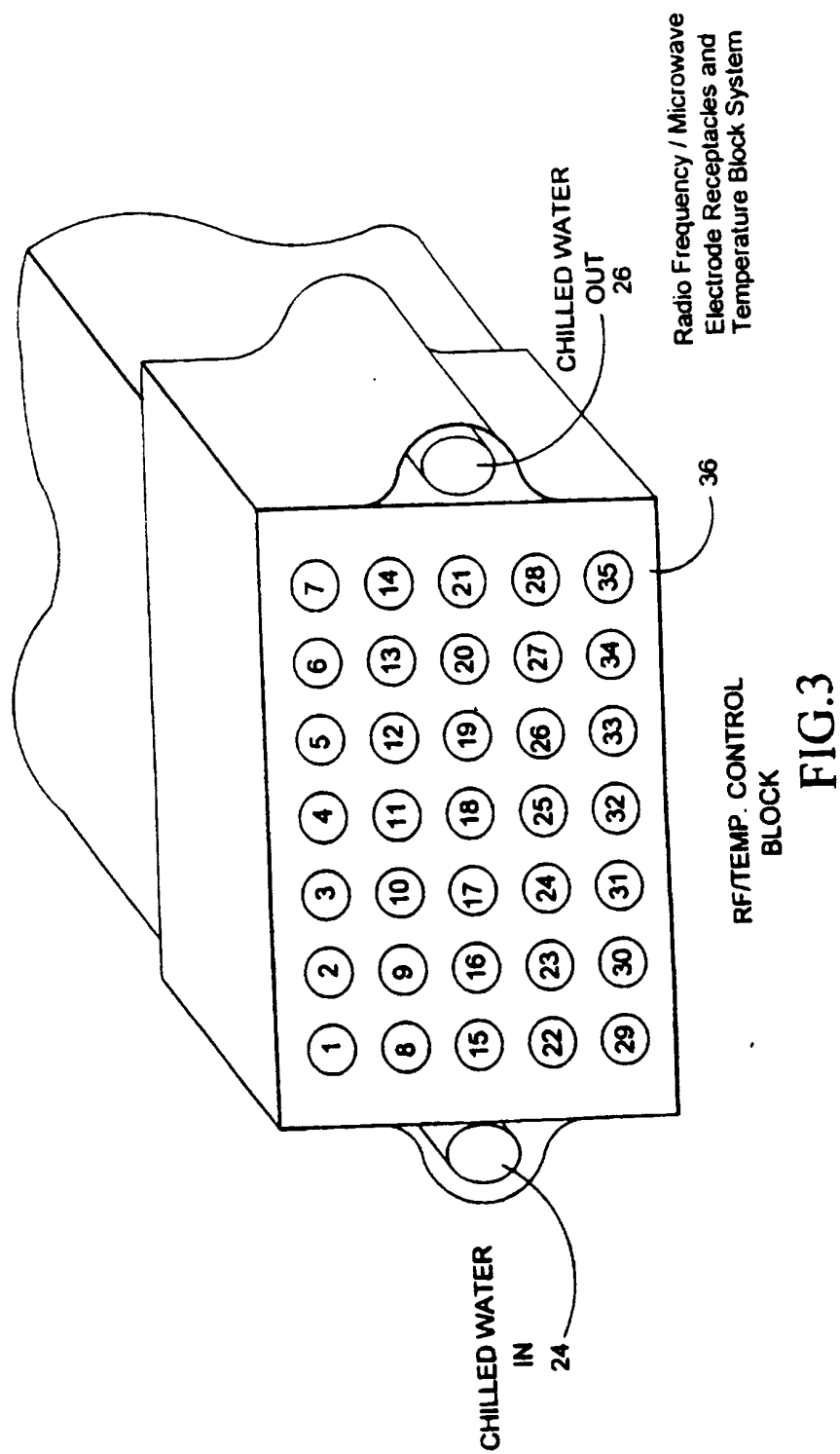


FIG.1



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3/17



4/17

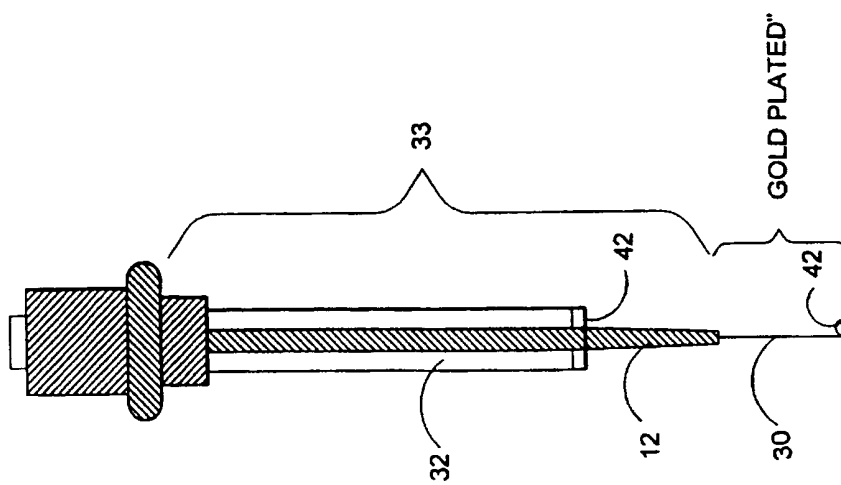


FIG. 4

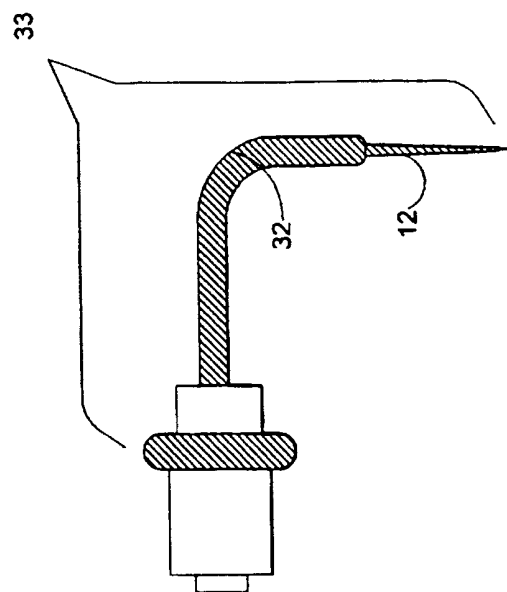


FIG. 5

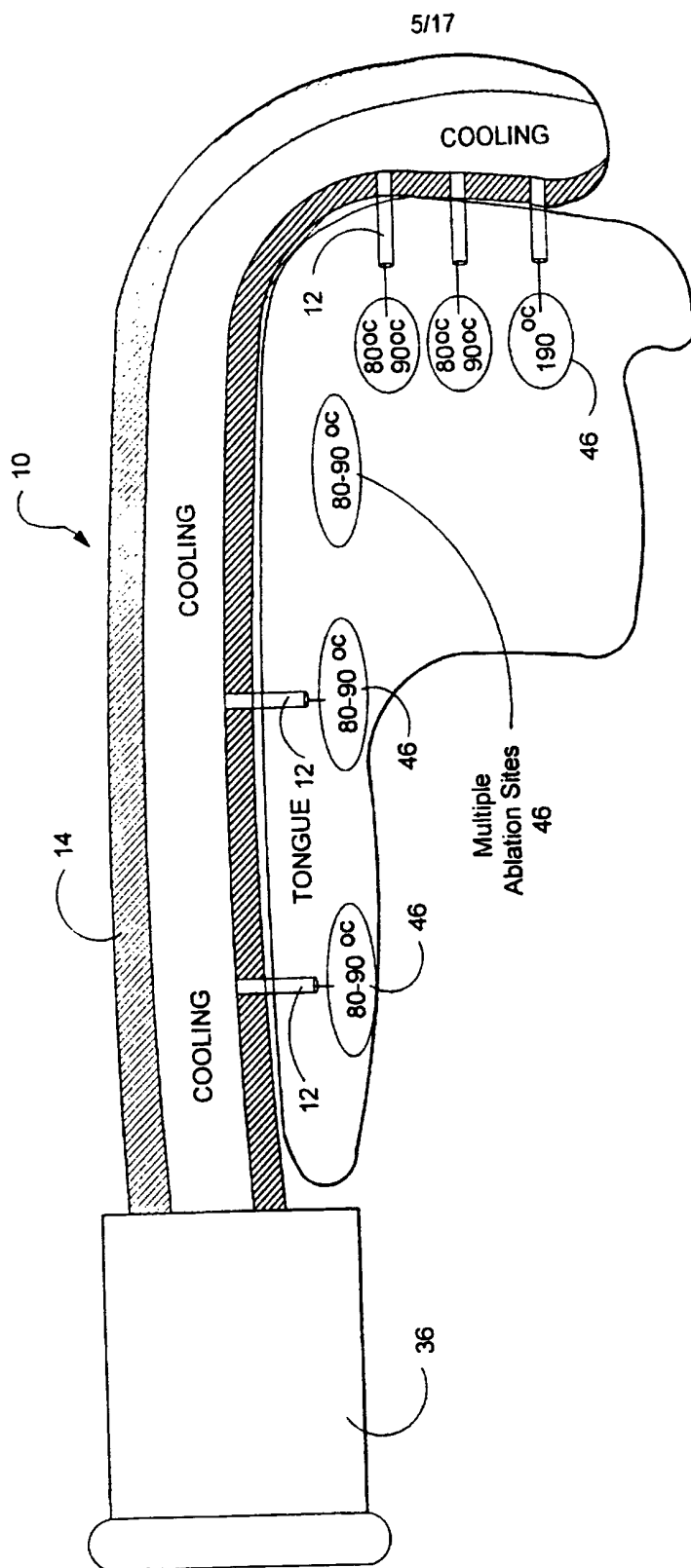


FIG.6

6/17

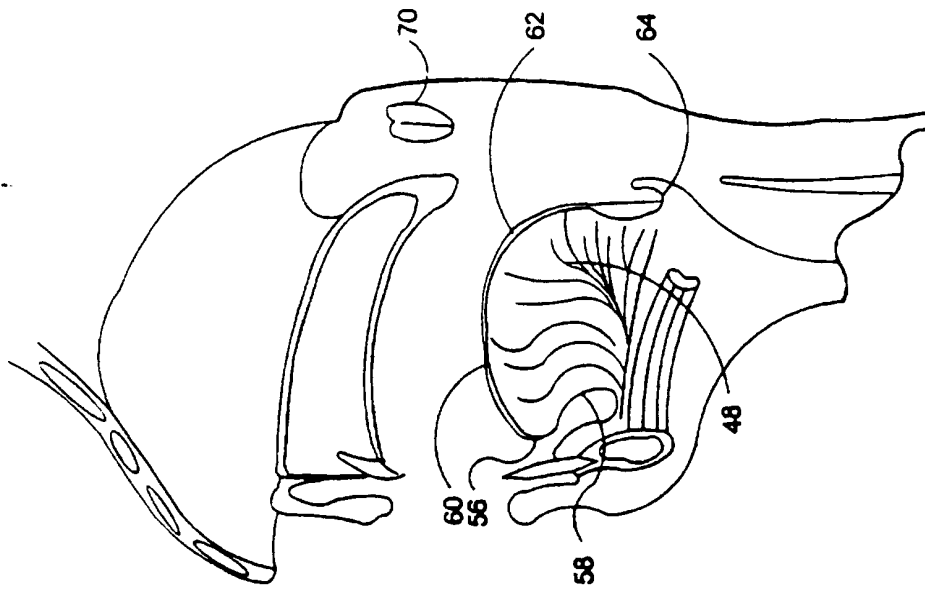


FIG. 8

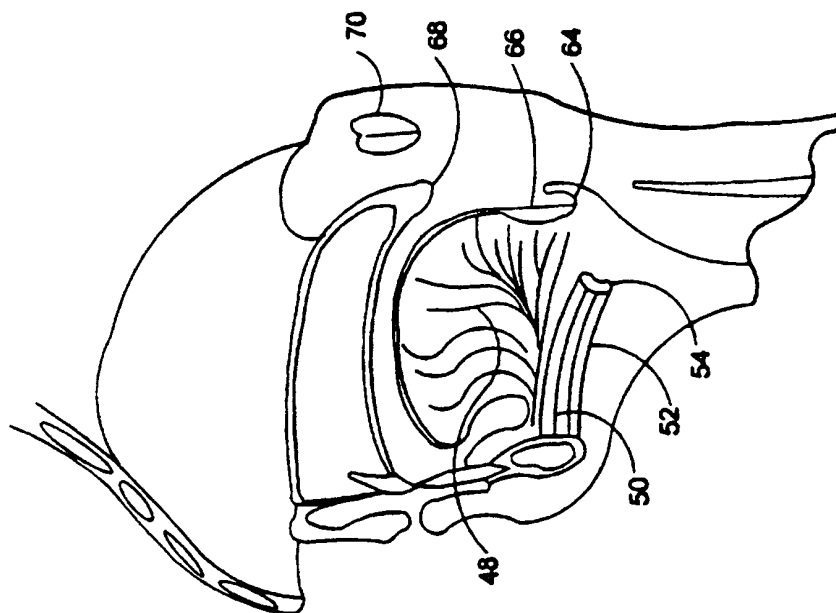


FIG. 7

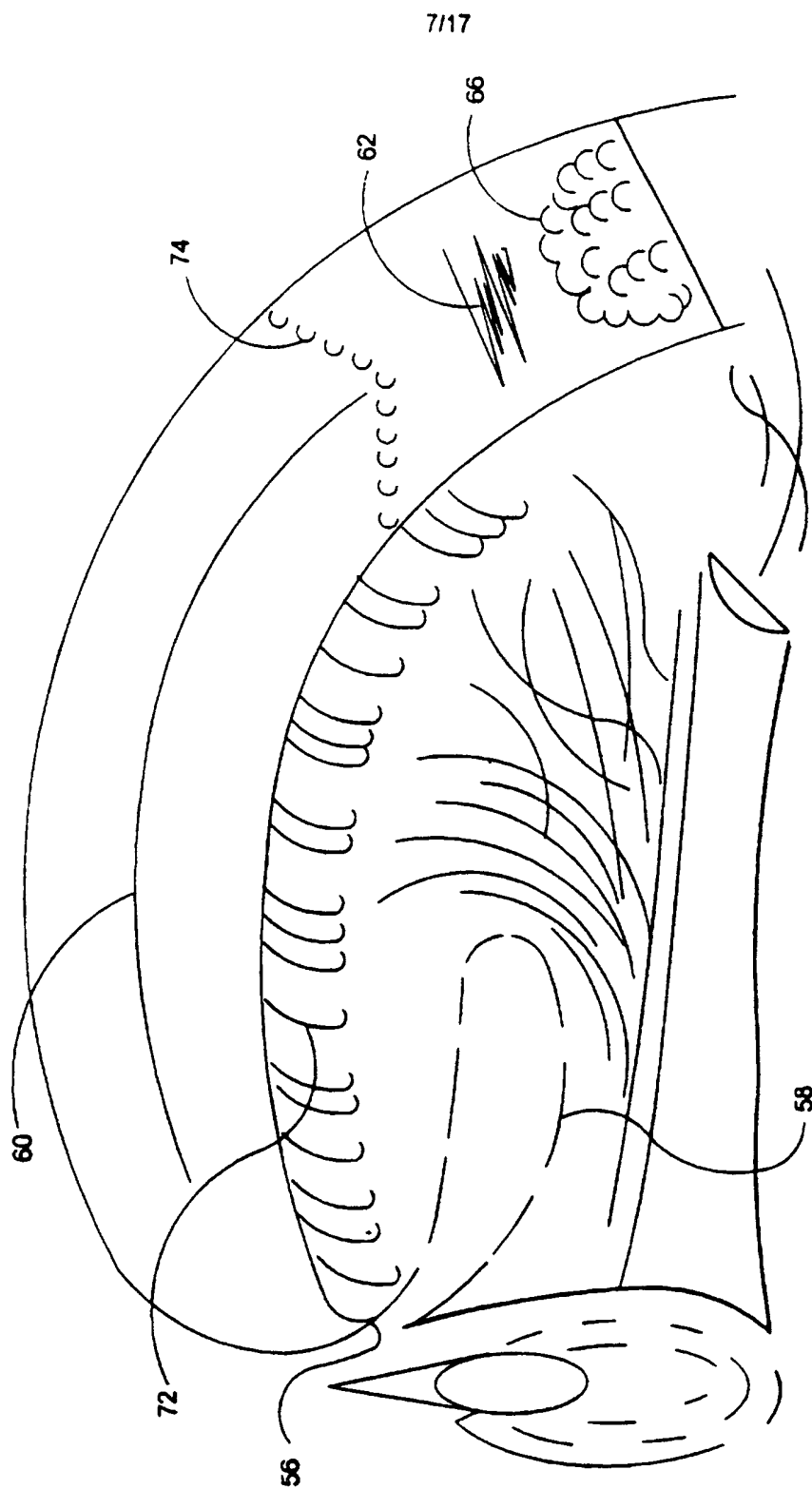


FIG. 9

8/17

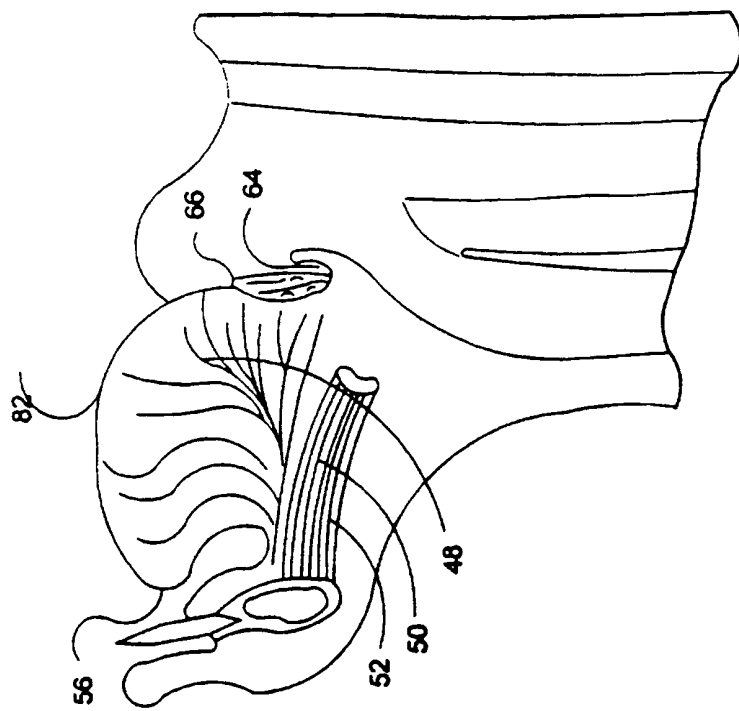


FIG. 11

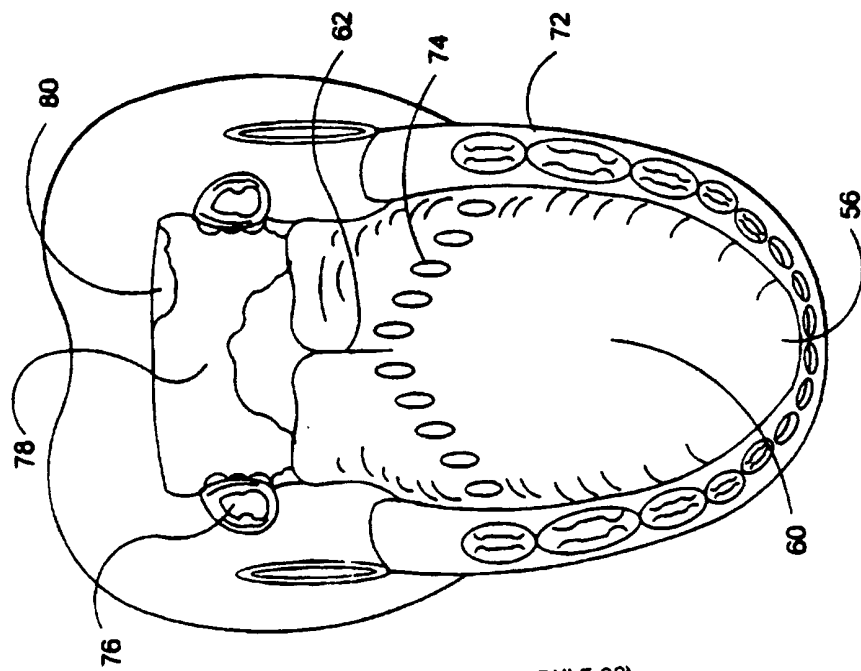


FIG. 10

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9/17

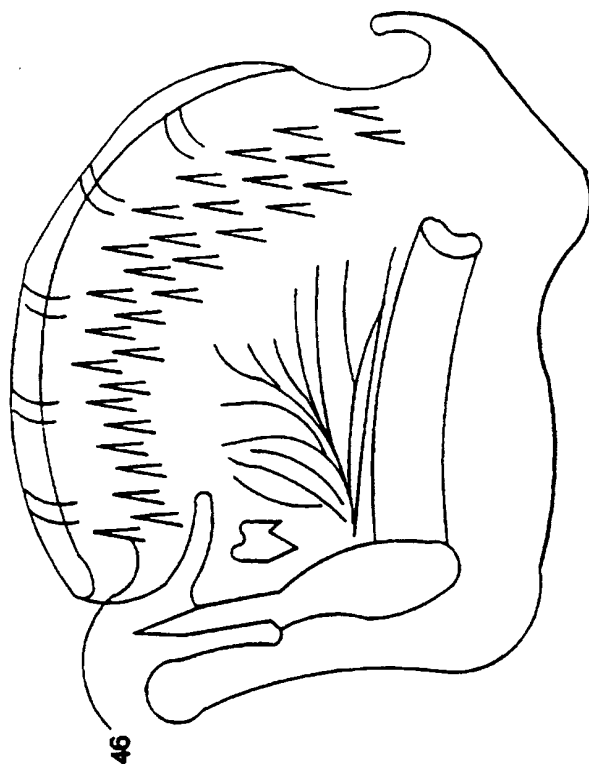


FIG.13

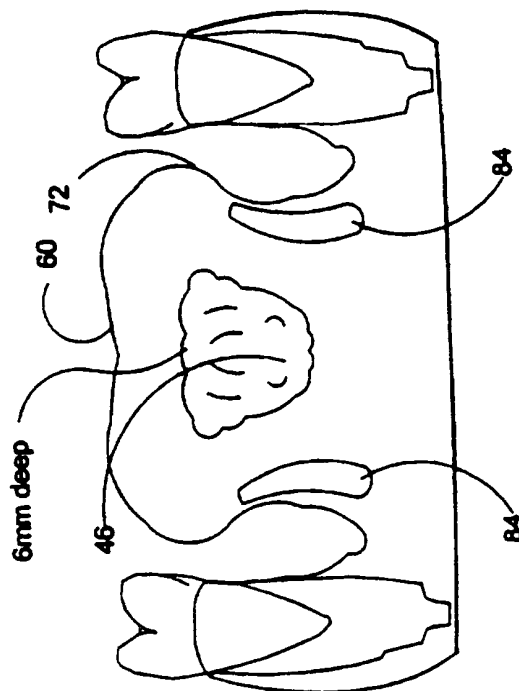


FIG.12

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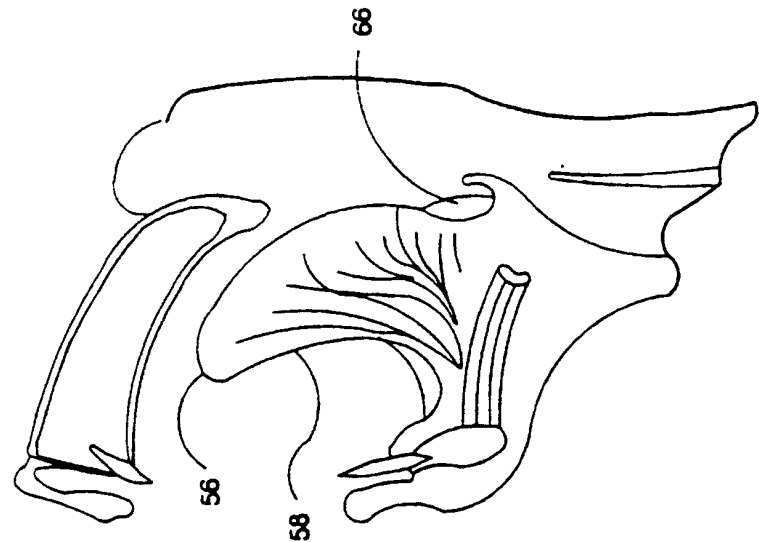


FIG. 15

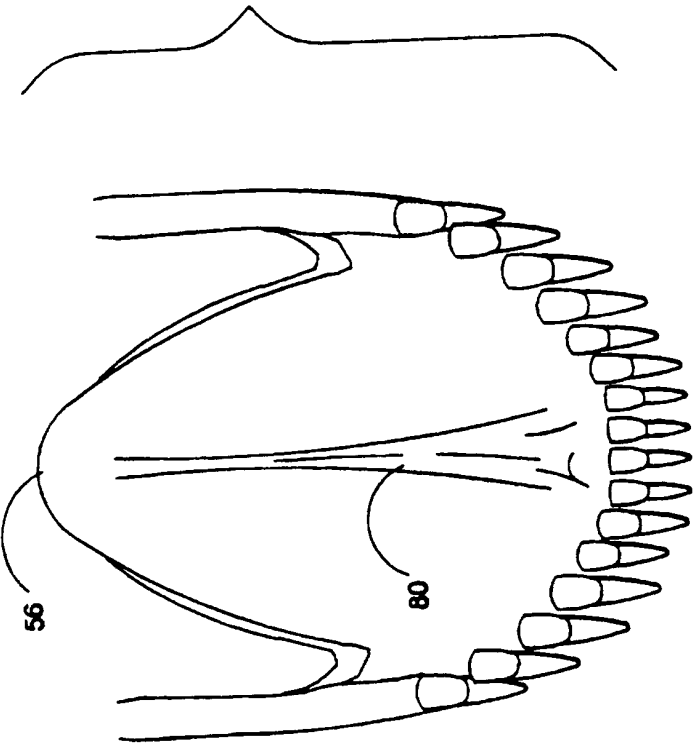


FIG. 14

11/17

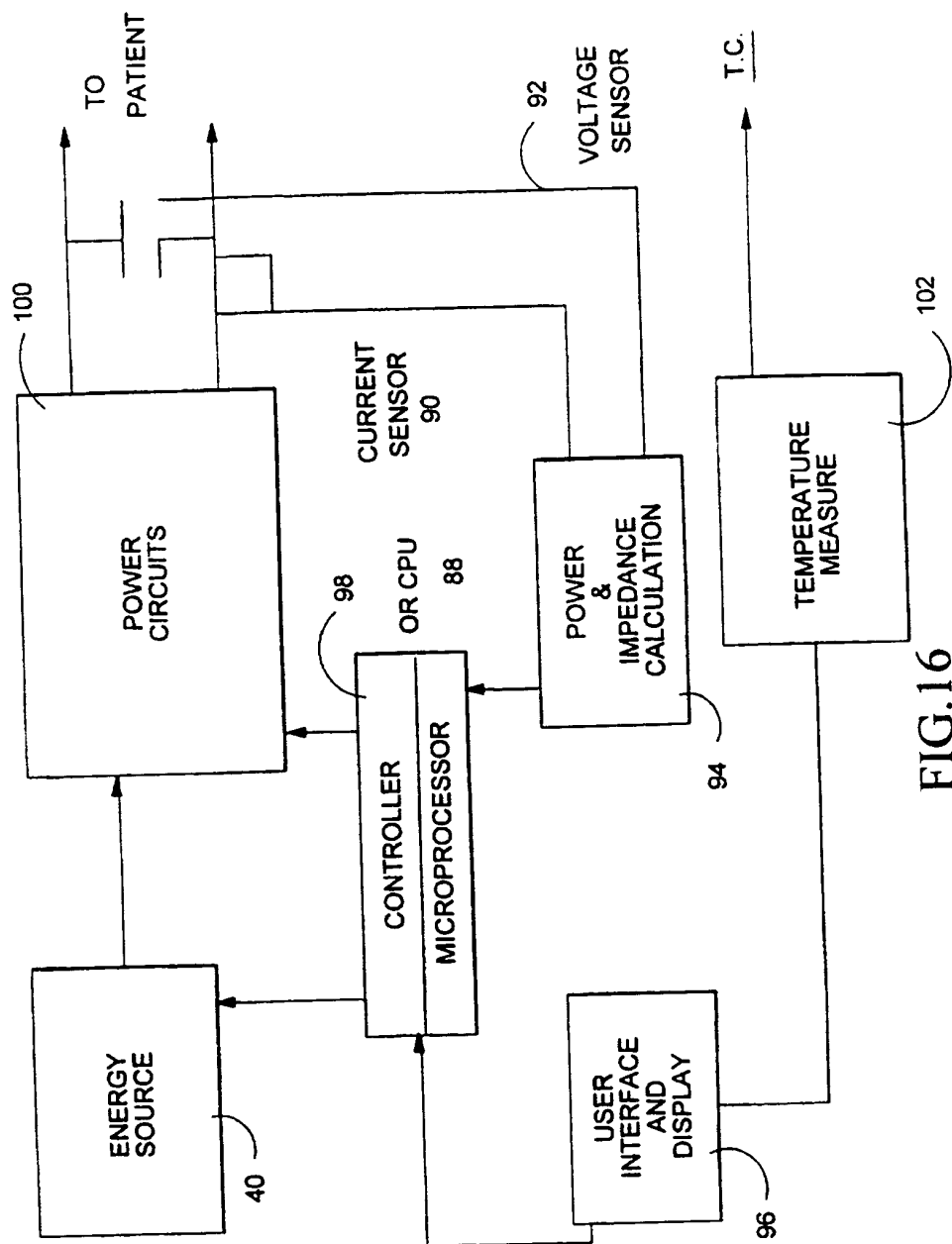


FIG.16

12/17

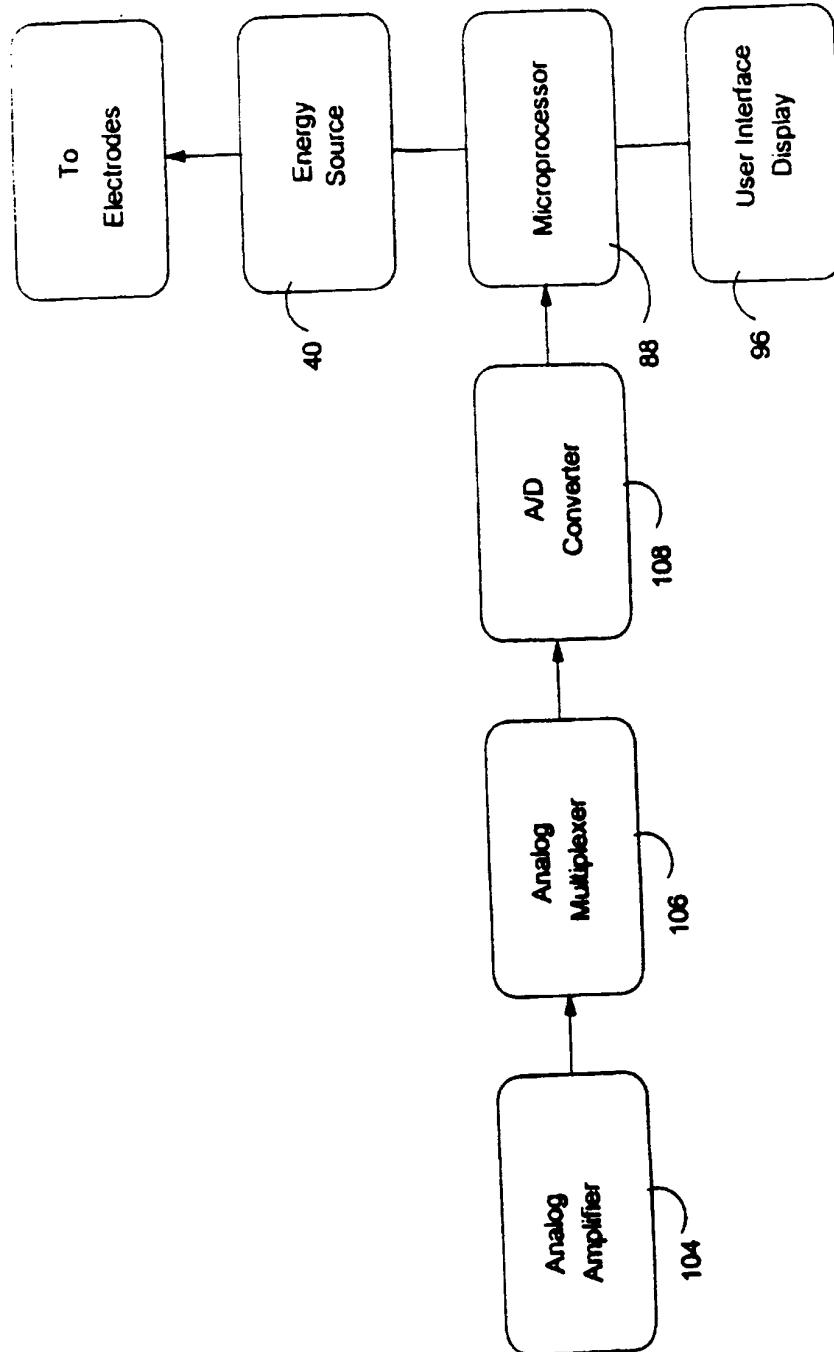


FIG.17

13/17

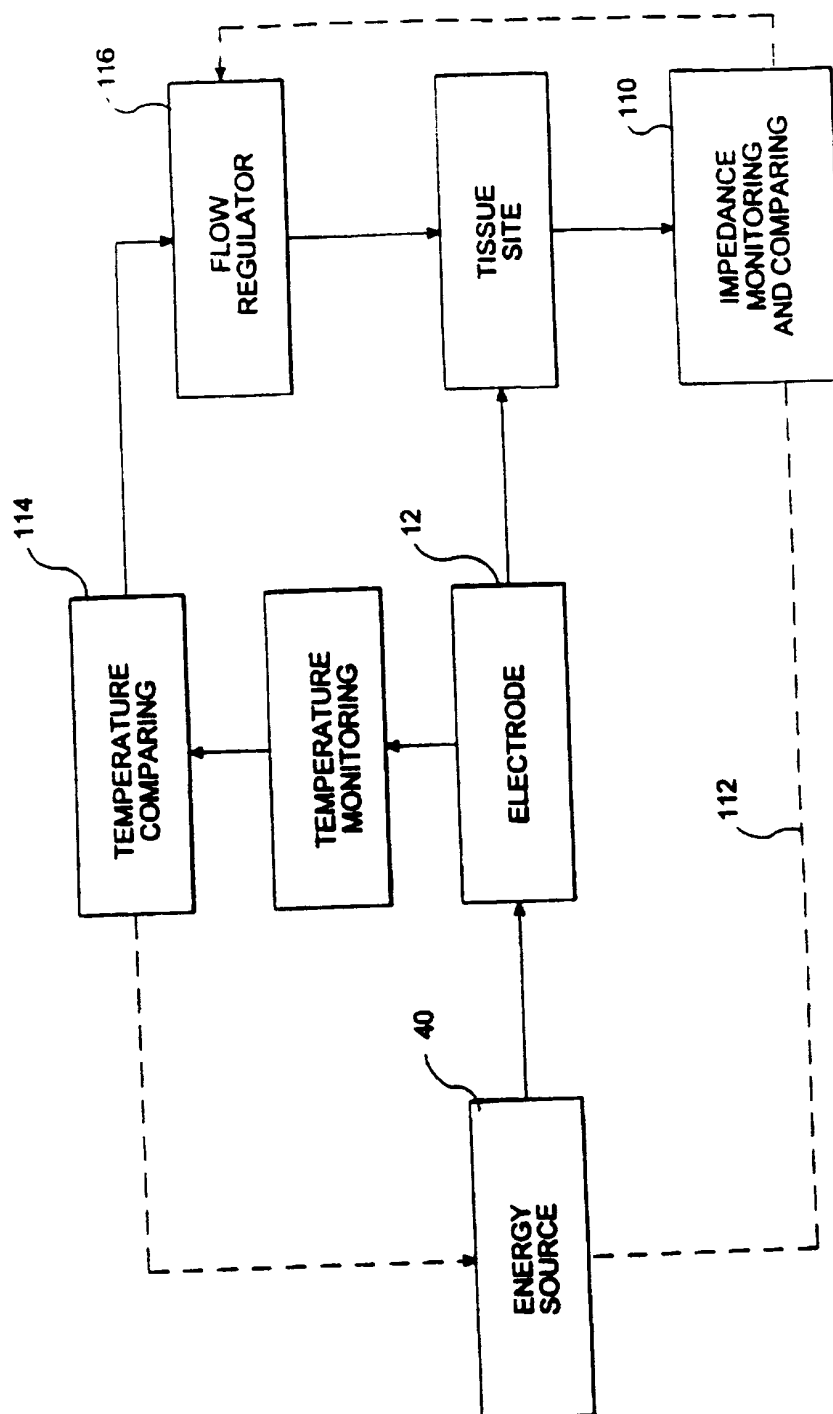
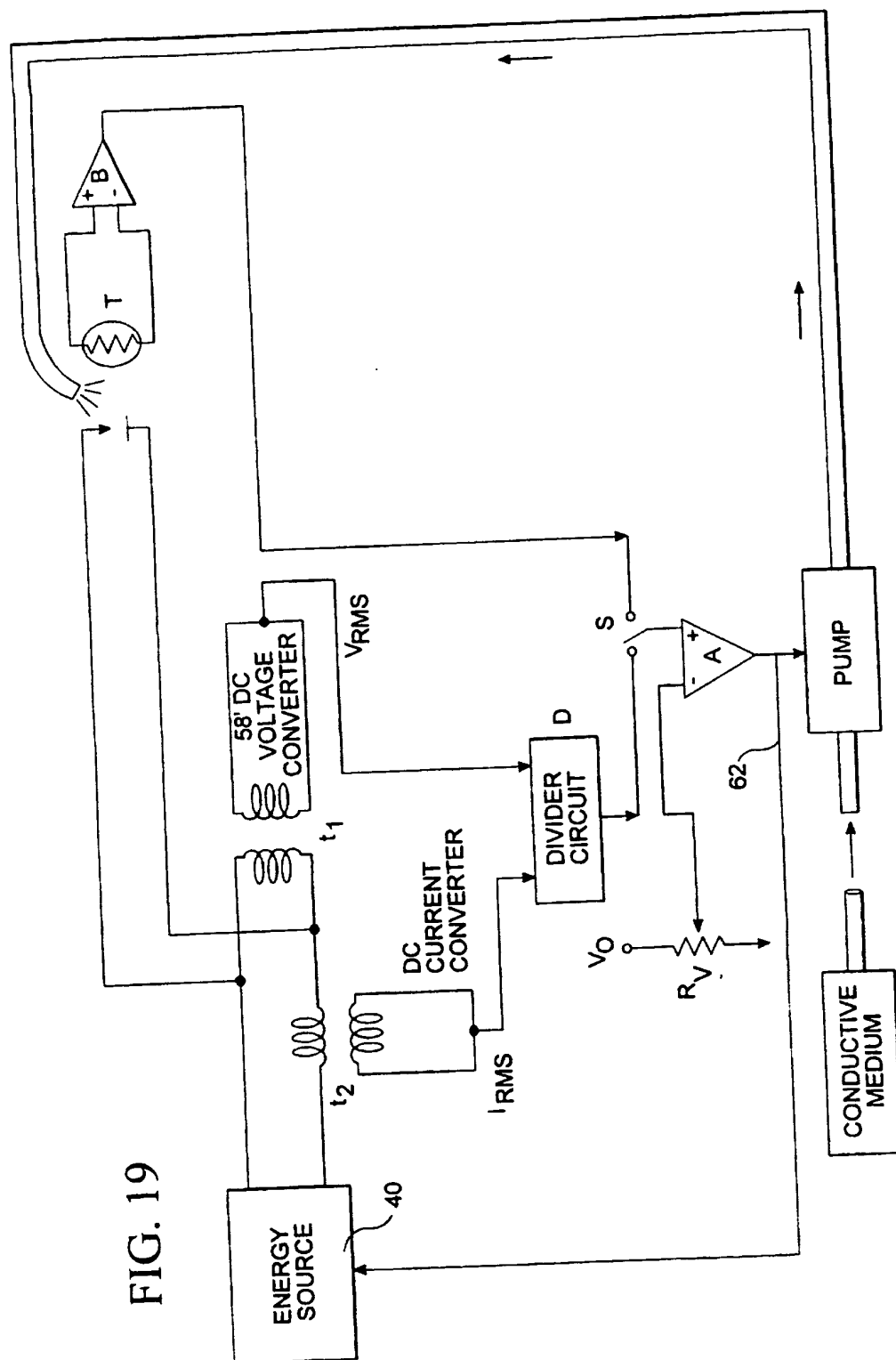


FIG. 18



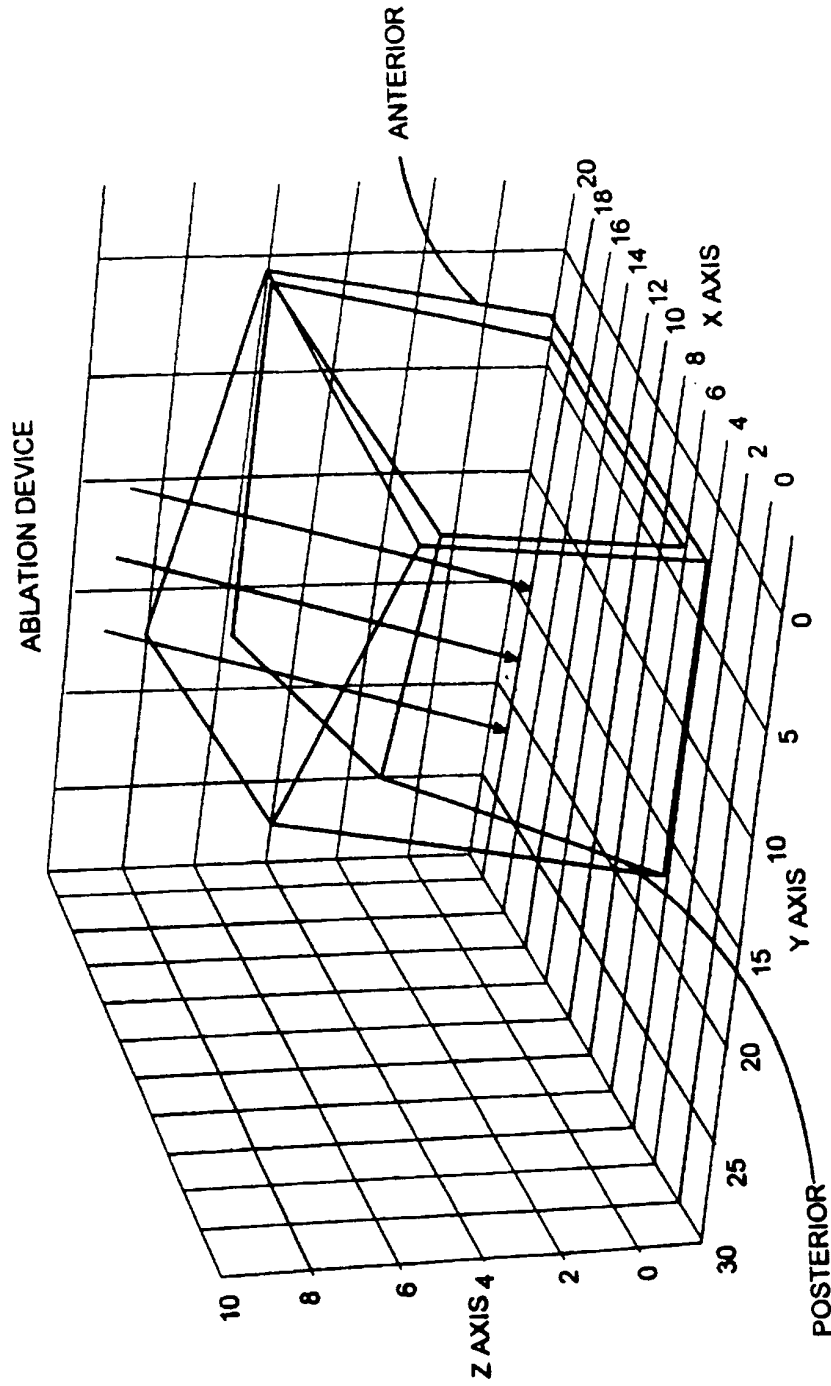


FIG. 20

AVERAGE SHRINKAGE IN Z DIRECTION = 20%

16/17

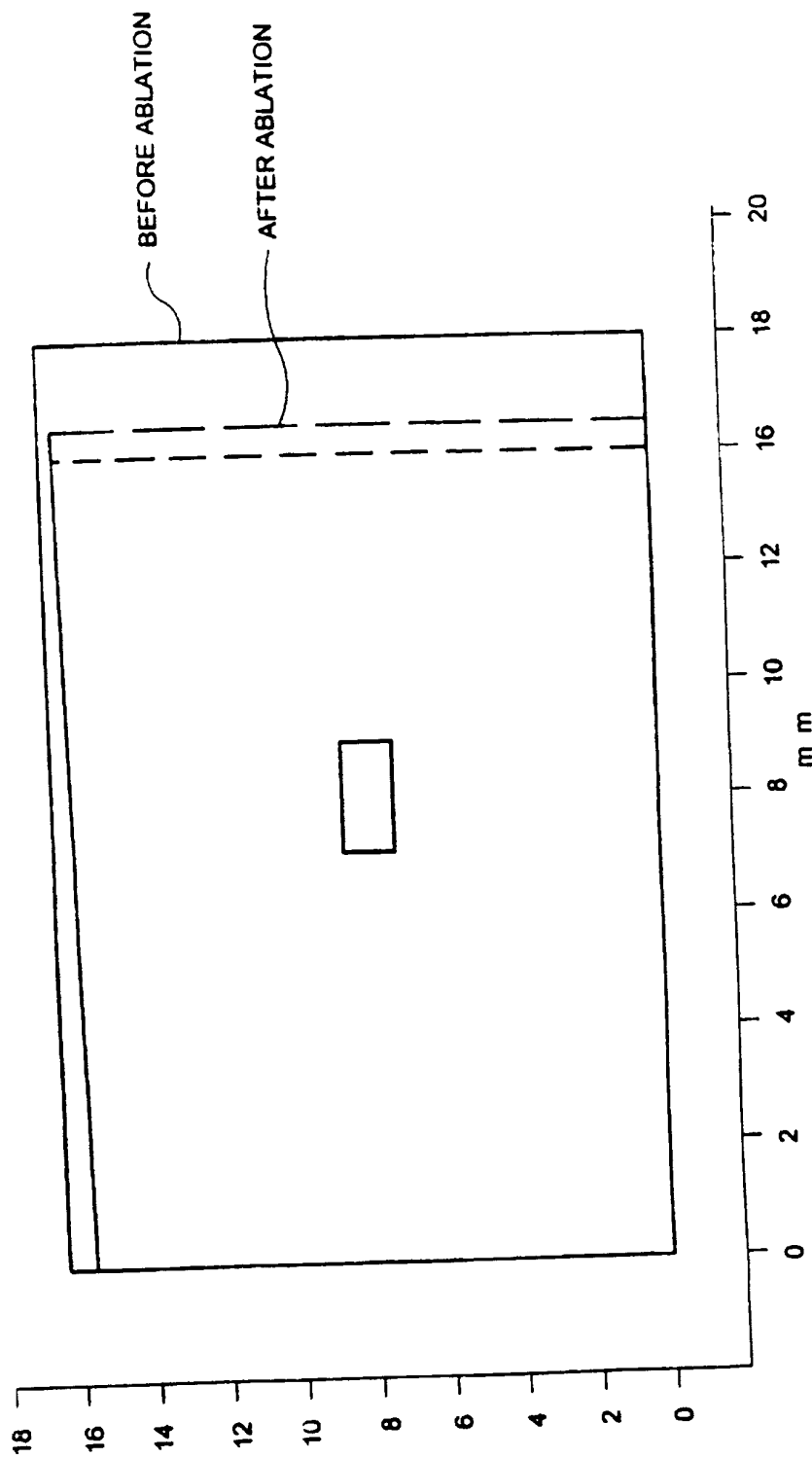


FIG. 21

17/17

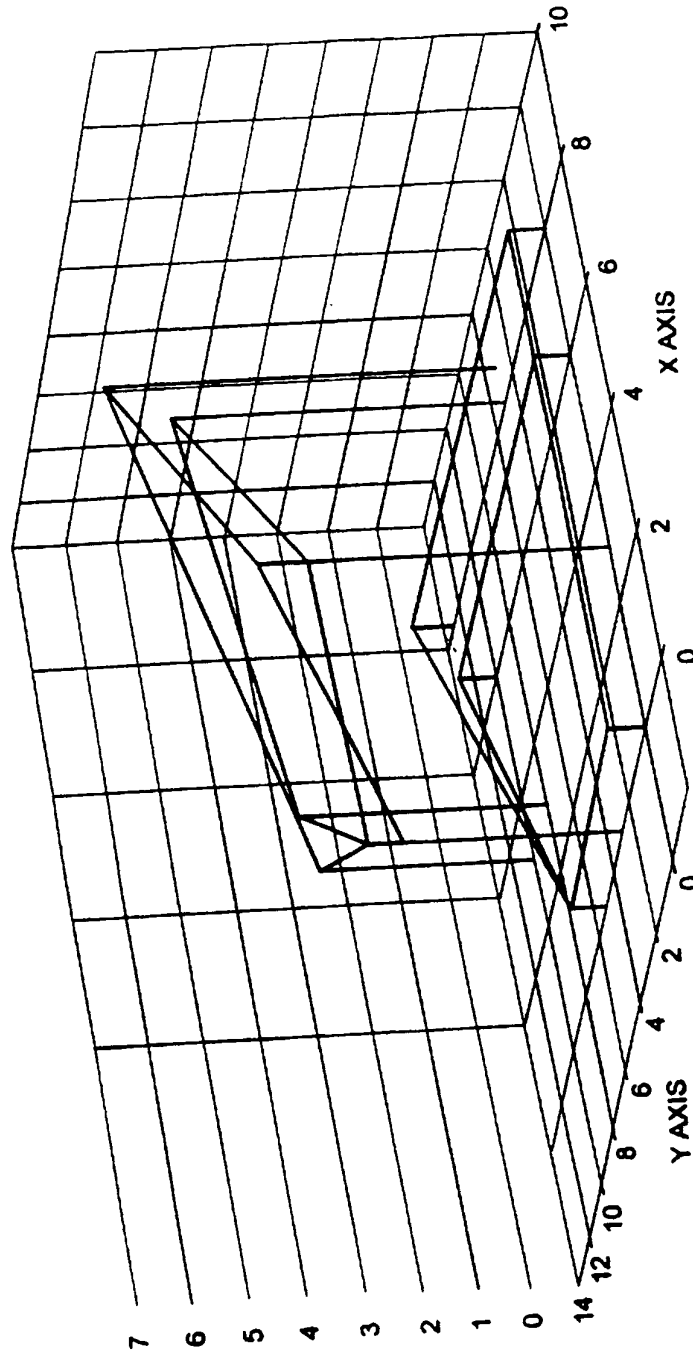


FIG. 22

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 97/08784

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A61N1/40 A61B17/39

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 A61B A61N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	WO 95 25472 A (VIDAMED) 28 September 1995 summary, detailed description see page 3, line 20 - line 24 ---	1-14
Y	WO 94 10925 A (AMERICAN CARDIAC ABLATION) 26 May 1994 specifically, fig 11,12 see the whole document ---	1-14
A	EP 0 608 609 A (CARDIAC PATHWAYS CORP.) 3 August 1994 see abstract; figure 1 -----	6

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

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- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
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- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

G document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

10 October 1997

Date of mailing of the international search report

21. 10. 97

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Authorized officer

Papone, F

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 97/08784

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☒ Claims Nos.: 15-29
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
Rule 39.1(iv) PCT - Method for treatment of the human or animal body by surgery
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Intern. Appl. Application No
PCT/US 97/08784

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